

The Linguistic Path of “Romance”: A Systemic-Functional Analysis and Gender Comparison of Songs of the 1950s and the 2000s

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Universidad Complutense de Madrid
ramironieto22@gmail.com

Recibido: 15.09.2012

Aceptado: 30.09.2012

ABSTRACT

This paper brings to the realm of linguistics a set of forty love songs in English and Spanish by male and female singers from two different decades: the 1950s and the 2000s. The main objective is to show that ideology is linguistically encoded in songs. Through the qualitative and quantitative analysis of *mental* and *material* processes expressed by verbs in the lyrics, the differences in the construction of ‘romance’ and relationships between the two decades will be presented. The findings show that, in the 2000s, love songs are much more material than six decades ago (commonly mental). The study also reveals that in the 50s men were active and seducers whereas women were passive and ‘objectified’. However, in the 21st century two trends for each gender can be distinguished: women as the active ones or just as wild and independent. Men are portrayed either as sensitive or louts.

Key words: gender roles, mental and material processes, romance, lyrics, image.

El camino lingüístico del amor: análisis sistémico- funcional y comparación de género en canciones de los años cincuenta y los dos mil

RESUMEN

Este artículo acerca al mundo de la lingüística cuarenta canciones de amor cantadas en inglés y en español por hombres y mujeres de los años 50 y los dos mil. El objetivo principal es demostrar que la ideología se encuentra codificada, lingüísticamente, en las canciones. Mediante un análisis cualitativo y cuantitativo de los procesos *mentales* y *materiales* expresados por los verbos de las canciones, se comentarán las diferencias encontradas en la construcción del “romance” y las relaciones amorosas entre las dos décadas. Los resultados muestran que, en la primera década de los dos mil, las canciones de amor son mucho más materiales que seis décadas atrás (cuando solían ser mentales). El estudio también revela que en los 50, los hombres eran activos y seductores mientras que las mujeres eran pasivas. Sin embargo, al comienzo del siglo XXI, se pueden distinguir dos vertientes para cada género: ahora las mujeres aparecen como activas o salvajes e independientes y los hombres como sensibles o gamberros.

Palabras clave: papel de género, procesos mentales y materiales, amor, canciones, imagen

Songs and poems began life as inseparable twins,
but they are now - for the most part - thoroughly estranged.
Rob Woodard.

1. INTRODUCTION.

Music, as a way of mass communication, has a huge potential and a strong influence to reach the great audience who, unconsciously, process the message and imitate the patterns of the *characters* in songs. Artists are not simply telling stories when singing; they are also communicating identity discourses and revealing cultural values but we do not realise how easily influenced by them we are. The creation of those *characters* requires a more complex explanation, since it does not only have to do with the invisible *voice* speaking through the singer, but also with the singer's performance and pose. The music industry entails an intricate process of manipulation and transmission of ideas aimed, mainly, at the youngest groups of society. It is just the process of marketing a product with a consistent brand made up by catchy songs and a stunning image that sends a message to the consumer. The industry understood that music could sell ideas and lifestyles.

That is, precisely, why the linguistic analysis of the song lyrics comes in very handy. This paper aims to contribute to throw some light on the ways in which manipulation and conveyance of ideas are carried out as well as to compensate the insufficiencies of former studies on gender analysis in songs from a linguistic point of view. More specifically, the objective then is to bring songs to the realm of linguistics to show that ideology is linguistically encoded in them. Through the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the *mental* and *material* processes expressed by verbs, the way male and female roles regarding *romance* are portrayed in lyrics of both periods will be analysed. The following example can help clarify the main goal:

Sofía, 15 years old (dressing in a provocative way):

"Why am I dressing this way? Well, I don't know, it is trendy and boys prefer girls wearing high heels and mini skirt rather than long skirts. All my girl friends buy small and tight outfits and love showing their cleavage... I will get breast augmentations as soon as possible. Yes, I know I have got a 90 bra size but I want a 100. In that way my clothes will fit best and I will sleep with anyone I want to"¹ (Grijalba, 2011: 31).

The purpose of this study is to show that reactions of this kind are a direct consequence of different social factors, music and songs being one of them.

¹ The translation into English is mine.

The present paper has been divided into five sections: the starting point is the identification of the principal hypothesis around which the whole analysis revolves (Section 1). Section 2 reviews literature on Gender, Stylistics and Systemic-functional linguistics. Section 3 deals with the methodology followed: corpus, procedure and sources of the data. Section 4 presents the analysis and discussion of the results and section 5 offers several conclusions and suggestions for further research.

2. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS.

After reading the lyrics of some independent songs from both decades, it is hypothesized that sixty years ago, men and women's songs were, overwhelmingly, more mental than now, when they are characterised by being purely material, as will be shown later on. This can be tested by the following examples²:

(i) In the 50s, the concepts of *love* and love relationship were constructed in terms of 'mental' processes, as in: *You are all I could pray for; all that you are; that's what I wake up* ("As I Love You". Shirley Bassey, 1958).

(ii) Whereas current time songs conceptualize *romance* by means of 'material' processes. As this fragment by Justin Timberlake illustrates: *You mother fuckers watch how I attack* ("Sexy Back", 2006).

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

For the elaboration of the present research paper, two main linguistic approaches have been followed: Gender (Stylistics) and Transitivity, from a Systemic-functional perspective. These approaches will be treated in 2.1 and 2.2., respectively.

3.1. GENDER.

In her work *Gender & Language* (2006), Litosseliti makes interesting remarks on the construction of gender in the media discourse and advertisements that can be also extrapolated to the realm of music and songs. She maintains (2006: 93) that women are often portrayed in the media through their physical attributes, as sex objects, as mothers and wives, in passive or supportive roles, and as victims. Men are overwhelmingly depicted as strong, active and independent, but often objectified too. This description is applicable to the way men and women are presented in the music

² Most of the examples gathered in this paper have been extracted from the 40 lyrics used for the analysis.

world. In fact, music and media complement and benefit each other in terms of image and marketing.

Appearance is crucial in the 'feminine community' and media and music play an essential role in the construction of femininity. But the importance of appearance and consumerism is also affecting men. Litosseliti points out (2006: 103-104) that there is a new form of masculinity but there are two kinds of men: the good and the bad man. The new man is a 'contradictory development'. On the one hand he is re-packaging an old, traditional masculinity based on male success, wealth, power and heterosexual desire. On the other hand, he is entertaining progressive and anti-sexist discourses to approach relationships and family life. The re-assertion of traditional masculinity involves addressing women as sexual objects, celebrating exclusive male friendship. According to Litosseliti, the 'new lad' formula of consumerism (drink, sport and sex), and the celebration of 'laddishness' is a systematic response to the instability in gender roles precipitated by feminism and to an alleged loss of the power of traditional masculinity. One of the extreme reactions to this new lad formula might be the case of the *ladette* phenomenon (García, 2009), increasingly frequent in many cultures, and which consists of women adopting attitudes and behaviour traditionally attributed to men. The following examples, extracted from the analysed songs by contemporary women, may help illustrate this concept: swear words (*Ooh, this my shit. Let me hear you say, this shit is bananas*); "cocky" and rude attitude (*I heard that you were talking shit and you didn't think that I would hear it [...]. So I'm ready to attack, gonna lead the pack, Gonna get a touchdown, gonna take you out [...]. So that's right dude, meet me at the bleachers, no principals...*), etc.

3.1.1. THE DISCOURSE SITUATION OF LITERATURE.

Leech and Short (1981: 257) argue that language is a vehicle of communication whereby one person conveys messages to another for different purposes (informing, ordering, persuading, etc.). The way the message is used to achieve such ends may be called "the rhetoric of discourse". Although mainly discussed in the realm of the novel or the short story, for the present study, it has been considered that the rhetoric of discourse can also be applied to the message of lyrics that will be regarded as a literary sub-genre quite similar to the novel or the short story. In the end song lyrics narrate a 'mini story' to be interpreted by the audience. Therefore, the new stylistics and the techniques and concepts of modern linguistics that are used for the study of literature will be adapted to the present paper. The review of stylistics in songs will be tackled from the linguistic point of view trying to contribute to the field since there is not much literature about linguistic approaches to lyrics.

In these genres (novel, short story and lyrics) the writer/singer informs the audience about a particular fictional world; but they also need to achieve a rapport with their readers/hearers. Any author or singer can assume that they share with their

audience a common fund of general background knowledge of the world that is needed to interpret even the simplest of sentences in a novel or a song: common inferences, knowledge of certain well-known historical events and socio-cultural facts, etc. The reader or "fan" becomes a hypothetical personage who shares with the author not just background experience but also a set of presuppositions and standards of what is pleasant and unpleasant, right and wrong (1981: 259). As reported by Machin (2010: 81), by identifying the role played by a character, the audience's attention is drawn to the *generic* rather than *specific* role of the character. And it is the former one that is of interest in this analysis because it tells about the cultural values, identities and behaviours that lie deeper in the song.

However, the views expressed through a work or a song should not be automatically ascribed to the author themselves (1981: 260). The seducer or the "vamp" in lyrics is a character created for a particular story, but it does not imply that the writer/singer approves their behaviour. Unfortunately, many teenagers believe the characters in songs. The teenage appetite for anything novel and "transgressive" makes them forget about the real person behind the final product. It is the actions performed by characters in songs that the following section deals with.

3.2. PROCESSES, PARTICIPANTS, CIRCUMSTANCES.

As language users, we are usually interested in participants and in the qualities we ascribe to them, in what they do, say and feel and the circumstances in which these happenings take place (Downing & Locke 2002). The semantic framework for a situation, therefore, consists of the following components:

1. The process (it can be a state, an action, a change of state, a climatic phenomenon, an event, a process of saying, behaving or simply existing),
2. The participants involved in the situation (they can be persons, objects or abstractions functioning as agent of the action or being affected by it),
3. The attributes ascribed to participants (they either identify or characterise the entity, or state its location in space or time) and
4. The circumstantial roles associated to the process (they include expressions of time, place, manner, means, cause, condition, concession, accompaniment and role).

To confirm the initial hypothesis, the different processes of verbs in songs will be analysed. Downing & Locke (2002: 112; 2006: 125) as well as Hallyday & Mathiessen (2002:134) distinguish three main types of processes:

- a) Material: processes of 'doing' (*kick, run, paint, write, send, give...*)
- b) Mental: processes of 'experiencing' or 'sensing' (*hear, feel, believe, like, hate, regret, forget...*)
- c) Relational: processes of 'being' or 'becoming' in which participants are

characterised, identified, or situated circumstantially (*be, seem, become, turn...*)

The present paper will pay particular attention to material and mental processes for the analysis of the lyrics since they are the most relevant for proving my hypothesis. Apart from this threefold categorization of processes, Halliday (2004) also includes more process types because he 'finds further categories located at the three boundaries not so clearly set apart, but recognizable': behavioural (on the borderline between 'material' and 'mental', verbal (on the borderline of 'mental' and 'relational') and existential (on the borderline between the 'relational' and the 'material').

4. METHOD

To observe the change of attitude towards romance over time, two distant periods were considered worth comparing: the first ten years of the 21st century (the current time marked by a liberalisation and inversion of traditional values) and the 1950s, post-war time characterised by the inflexibility of traditional values and deeply rooted gender roles. However, as the decade went by, a slight opening and change of attitude in society took place anticipating the revolutions, at all levels, of the 60s. All these traditional values and the new challenges have their representation in songs, as will be shown.

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA AND PROCEDURE

A quantitative analysis with a collection of empirical data has been carried out, in order to describe how the construction of love relationships in songs has changed over the last sixty years. The songs will be examined through a systemic analysis of processes to identify the main verbs in the songs. The verbs have been counted and tagged manually and different examples and graphs will be provided to illustrate the results. Although the study is quantitative, some particular cases (especially those regarding gender) are remarkable enough to be dealt with from a qualitative perspective.

The corpus of the study consists of a set of 40 songs from the 50s and 2000s, twenty in English and twenty in Spanish, sung by male and female sing stars. It was an essential requirement that the songs, on which the study is based, were popular enough to the great majority of the audience. Therefore, the number ones hits were selected or, at least, chart-topping songs to narrow down the variables. The music genres and styles that have been chosen to carry out the research are: jazz, copla, crooners, bolero, rock and pop ('mainstream' trend); all of them sharing the topic of *love* and *romance* as leitmotiv. The lyrics whose theme was far from the central line

of the paper were disregarded. The songs finally selected are listed, chronologically, on Table 1.

DECADE 1950s - 1960s	
Songs in English:	
MALE	FEMALE
- <i>Lady of Spain</i> (Eddie Fisher, 1952)	- <i>I Wanna Be Loved</i> (Andrews Sisters, 1950)
- <i>Don't Be Cruel</i> (Elvis Presley, 1956)	- <i>Fever</i> (Peggy Lee, 1958)
- <i>Ain't That a Kick in The Head</i> (Dean Martin, 1959)	- <i>As I Love you</i> (Shirley Bassey, 1958)
- <i>Beyond the Sea</i> (Bobby Darin, 1959)	- <i>Everybody's Somebody's Fool</i> (Connie Francis, 1960)
- <i>Save the Last Dance for Me</i> (The Drifters, 1960)	- <i>You and The Night and The Music</i> (Julie London, 1960)
Songs in Spanish:	
MALE	FEMALE
- <i>Dos gardenias</i> (Antonio Machín, 1950)	- <i>Espinita</i> (Ana María González , 1954)
- <i>Mirando al mar</i> (Jorge Sepúlveda, 1952)	- <i>Te he de querer mientras viva</i> (Marifé de Triana, 1955)
- <i>Contigo en la distancia</i> (Lucho Gatica,1954)	- <i>Luna de miel</i> (Gloria Lasso, 1958)
- <i>Amapola</i> (Luis Mariano, 1955)	- <i>El cordón de mi corpiño</i> (Antoñita Moreno, 1958)
- <i>Bye bye love</i> (Dúo Dinámico, 1959)	- <i>Es mi hombre</i> (Sara Montiel, 1958)
DECADE 2000 – 2010	
Songs in English:	
MALE	FEMALE
- <i>You're Beautiful</i> (James Blunt, 2005)	- <i>Independent Women</i> (Destiny's Child, 2001)
- <i>SexyBack</i> (Justin Timberlake, 2006)	- <i>Dirrty</i> (Christina Aguilera, 2002)
- <i>Kiss Kiss</i> (Chris Brown, 2007)	- <i>Hollaback Girl</i> (Gwen Stefani, 2005)

- Whatever You Like (T.I., 2008)	- <i>Single Ladies</i> (Beyonce, 2009)
- Baby (Justin Bieber, 2010)	- <i>Bad Romance</i> (Lady Gaga, 2009)
Songs in Spanish:	
MALE	FEMALE
- <i>Tu calorro</i> (Estopa, 2001)	- <i>Chicas malas</i> (Mónica Naranjo, 2001)
- <i>La camisa negra</i> (Juanes, 2006)	- <i>Soy yo</i> (Marta Sánchez, 2002)
- <i>Cobarde</i> (David Bustamante, 2008)	- <i>Con mis manos</i> (Bebe, 2006)
- <i>Esclavo de sus besos</i> (David Bisbal, 2009)	- <i>Loba</i> (Shakira, 2009)
- <i>Barbie de extrarradio</i> (Melendi, 2010)	- <i>Ni rosas ni juguetes</i> (Paulina Rubio, 2009)

Table 1. Songs selected for the corpus.

The compilation of the song lyrics was carried out by browsing different websites like: <http://www.lyrics.com>; <http://www.metrolyrics.com/>; <http://www.musica.com/>; <http://www.quedeletras.com/>.

The Internet was also used to find out the music charts of the United States, the UK and Spain in which the most well-known songs of each period are gathered. The charts consulted for the songs in English were found out on:

www.billboard.com; <http://www.popculturemadness.com/Music/Number-One-Songs-50s.html>; http://www.digitaldreamdoor.com/pages/best_billboard6.html; http://www.onlineweb.com/theones/1950_sheet.htm. And the sources for the songs in Spanish were: www.promusicae.org (AFYVE); www.sgae.es.

4.2. CRITERIA FOR THE TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS OF THE SONGS.

There are some criteria that have been born in mind for the analysis of the songs:

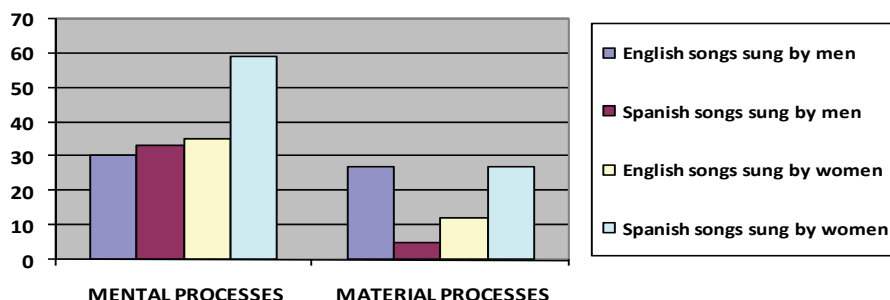
- For this analysis, the person of the Subject has to be taken into account. The analysis here will consider those verbs whose subject is “I” in English and “yo” in Spanish which are highly relevant for showing the role and attitude of men and women towards romance in both periods. According to Leech and Short (1981: 265-266), the choice of a first person narrator is a device that functions to produce a personal relationship with the audience which inevitably tends to bias the addressee in favour of the narrator/character. On the contrary, the third person form and the absence of an “I” invite the

audience to assume that there is no explicit “you”. The narration is presented directly without intermediary.

- Apart from the first person subject, all verbs whose agent is a group of men or women (e. g.: *Las chicas malas no saben perdonar, cuando juegan al amor*. Mónica Naranjo) or a 3rd person singular (e. g.: *una loba en el armario, tiene ganas de salir*. Shakira) will be taken into account in the analysis and final count of the processes, since they represent the gender.
- Only verbs in simple sentences have been analysed (SUBJECT+VERB). No subordination has been checked, except in the case of subordinate clauses sharing the same first person subject of the main clause. (E.g.: *I wanna be kissed until I tingle*. Andrew Sisters).
- All the occurrences of a verb that is repeated several times (verses and chorus) are also included in the final count of the processes. If the same idea is repeated over and over again, the message will have an effect on the audience’s memory and that is significant for the analysis.
- Metaphors have been analysed and classified depending on the context of the song. That is, most of them have been interpreted according to their first meaning and classified as material (“my head keeps spinning”. *Ain't That A Kick in the Head*). But there are some exceptions that have been included in mental processes (“this heart of mine is breaking” [=suffering]. *Everybody's Somebody's Fool*).

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The first graph reveals that the most frequent textual process in romantic songs by men and women in the 50s was the mental one with a total of 157 cases in both languages, compared to the 72 instances of material processes. The songs of this period were more based on abstract concepts, big ideals and emotions than in material actions.

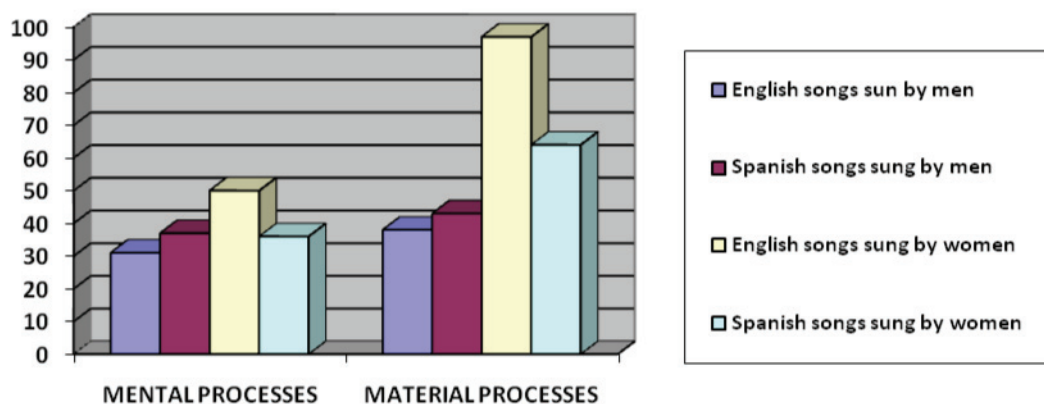


Graph 1. Mental and material processes in 1950s songs (English and Spanish).

Graph 1 shows that verbs of “thinking” are the most repeated ones in the songs of this decade. While the difference between the occurrences of both processes in men’s songs is very short, the contrast between one and another in the case of women’s is really noticeable. This peculiarity can be interpreted as the little “mobility” that women had at that time with regard to men. Especially, in the Spanish songs, the difference is higher: 59 examples of mental processes vs. 27 of material. It seems that women were not those who made the decisions. They were like objects, perfect and quiet housewives that could only perceive the world around from home, but few times participate. They waited, patiently, to be *conquered* by men. However, it is worth mentioning that, women’s songs closer to the new decade (1960s), manifest a slight opening and change of mind and more material processes start to appear.

As for men, there is a remarkable difference in the distribution of material processes: there are extremely few cases of material processes in Spanish songs performed by men (5 cases) while they are more frequently used by their English counterparts (27 occurrences). Might this mean that they were more romantic or dreamers? The most plausible reason is the fact that, as mentioned before, the Spanish music was more tied to the past. It was more related to the *Latin lover* and seducer of the previous decades than to the new *bad boy* of the English music.

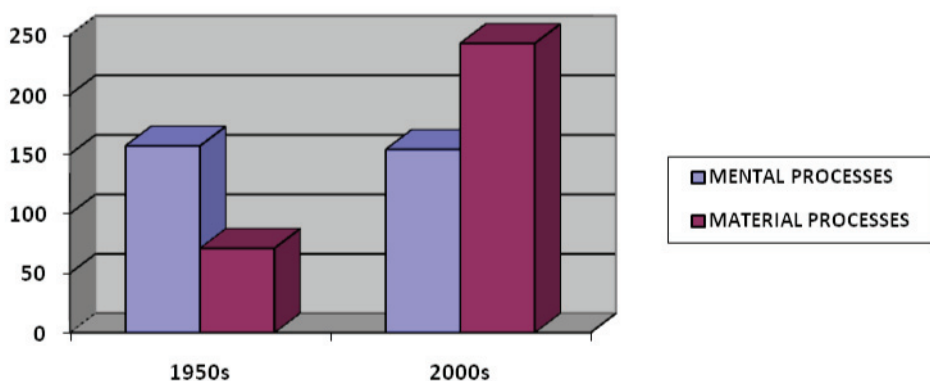
On the other hand, the analysis of current time songs has revealed interesting results as well. Graph 2 reflects that, apart from the bigger prominence of material processes in the songs by both sexes, (242 vs.154 cases of mental processes), there is a much higher ratio (the double) of “doing” verbs in women (161) than in men (81). This outstanding feature is, probably, due to the new role that women have acquired over the last decades. The liberalisation and independence of women has led to a more active situation in which both male and female roles are much more equal.



Graph 2. Mental and material processes in 2000s songs (English and Spanish).

The message of the lyrics of this time depicts a woman who is not an empty vessel to be 'filled' any more. Now, they are dynamic women in control of their actions and able to face men. This makes them more independent and powerful to the audience (particularly, female audience) who tries to imitate those attitudes and self-assurance. The fact that the material processes of women with 'I' as Subject have grown enormously has to do with women's will to be agents of their own actions. That is, they want to control their lives. In the 2000s the total of processes of all kinds with 'I' as Subject are higher for women than for men. Mental and material processes in men lyrics have a similar trend in both languages.

Graph 3 illustrates the addition of all the processes and the occurrences of the two processes in both times (women and men included).



Graph 3. Comparison of the 2 processes in both times (women and men included).

In general terms, the results in Graph 3 indicate, on the one hand, little variation of mental processes in both periods (157 occurrences in the 50s and 154 in the 2000s); they are almost exactly the same. On the other hand, the material ones have impressively increased over the last sixty years in both sexes and in both languages (243 cases in the last decade compared to 71 in the 1950s).

5.1. SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS AND EXAMPLES.

Some examples connected with the previous results are provided to illustrate the outlook, in terms of mental and material processes, of the two decades:

a) *Mental processes typical of the 1950s:*

○ Male singer:

- *Right from the night I first **saw** you, My heart has been **yearning** for you.*
- *Yo te **quiero** amada niña mía, Igual que **ama** la flor la luz del día*

○ Female singer:

- *You are all I could **pray** for, All that you are, That's what I **wake up***
- *Nunca **sabr ** por qu  **siento** tu pulso en mis venas, nunca **sabr ** en qu  viento lleg  este querer*

b) *Material processes typical of the 2000s:*

○ Male singer:

- *I'm **bringing** sexy back, You mother fuckers watch how I **attack***
- *Yo te **quitaba** la ropa, todas las palomas que **cojo** vuelan a la pata coja*

○ Female singer:

- *So I'm ready to **attack**, gonna lead the pack **Gonna get** a touchdown, gonna take you out*
- *Remo lejos de tu tempestad, Sin tus velas lo podr  **lograr**.*

5.2. SEXUALIZATION OF MUSIC: TEXT AND IMAGE.

A certain aggressiveness and sexual roughness have been detected in present-time song-lyrics by male and female singers, especially in the female ones. The constant sexualisation of women, by men and themselves, leads to talk about an increasing *pornification* in songs: it seems that the porn industry is invading other sectors such as music.

5.2.1. THE POWER OF THE IMAGE.

The message of songs is what unconsciously remains, but there is something even more powerful than the message: the image. The male or female singer performance on stage or in a video-clip is not only limited to singing and playing a role. There is an image that is also projected and whose purpose is to shock people's consciousness. That image is composed of lascivious movements and a strong physical appearance (hairstyle, clothes, etc.) intended to impress the public as much as possible. The result of taking to the extreme these impressive images and the wish to astonish people is, on the one hand, the hyper-sexualized looks of many young female artists, and on the

other hand, a less sexualised, but equally irreverent image of male singers. These two profiles together with messages full of explicit sexual references, rudeness and swearing words give rise to the perfect saleable product of modern times. Levande (2007: 304-305) argues that there are endless music videos in which women are lauded for pulling their clothes off. She states that, in consequence, other images of women that challenge porn culture's status quo seem to have been phased out. Thus, female artists are supposed to take their clothes off to be heard; what Levande calls "compliance masked in defiance". Music companies are responsible for this situation and they keep on launching new artists who are "packaged" by marketing departments to become a pop sensation and appeal to young consumers.

5.2.2. PORNIFICATION IN SONGS (THE MUSICSCAPE³).

Paasonen, Nikunen and Saarenma (2007) justly comment that "pornified imagery forms only a part of the knowledge that constantly obfuscates the border between the public and the private" (2007: 129). The aesthetics of the porn industry is *hijacking* other sectors of everyday life, such as music. It is difficult to enter *Youtube* or any other music site on the web without coming across highly sexualised video clips by well-known artists, available for both adults and children. Christina Aguilera, in 2002, sang the following: *Let's get dirty, I need that, uh, to get me off sweat'n til my clothes come off [...]. Wanna get dirty, it's about time for my arrival, heat is up. So ladies, fellas, drop your cups body's hot front to back. Now move your ass, I like that.* The hyper-sexuality of current society and the tendency to follow the patterns marked by adults contribute to a growing loss of preadolescence and provoke that 13-year-old girls end up dressing like porn stars. Hair extensions, big breasts, silicon lips, mini-skirts, impossibly high-heels and excessive make-up characterise the "modern" young girls, whereas boys choose tight t-shirts and skinny jeans to show off their muscles. The traditional clothing of porn is trendy and young people adopt it. This can be exemplified by the case of Sofía (Introduction section) and by the following fragment of a song by Shakira: *Tengo tacones de aguja magnetica para dejar a la manada frenetica.*

As Grijalba points out (2011: 30) it now seems that the aspiration of many young girls is to live a doll's life. As soon as they abandon childhood they head for conquering a dyed, shaved and tanned image, like that of their favourite celebrities. Curvaceous artists like Rihanna, Beyonce o Shakira (some of the singers whose songs are analysed in this paper) are the role model for many young girls.

³ This word has been blended by me. The original in the article (Paasonen, Nikunen and Saarenma, 2007) was "streetscape". I readapted the term for the context of the present paper.

Adolescents feel the need to imitate public social models. According to a study carried out by K.W. Chan (2010), the desire to be trendy plays a more important role than the desire to be rich and superior among young people. Media celebrities are perceived as trend setters in society and young people are attracted mainly by the symbolic imageries of celebrities rather than their wealth (2010: 63). All these features have a strong effect on teenagers and more increasingly on children. From their early youth, girls think that the only way of captivating boys is to dress as provocatively as possible or even behave like boys have traditionally done. This new feminine role is connected with the so-called *ladette* phenomenon, previously discussed: masculinisation to become equal. Another example by Shakira illustrates this tendency: *Una loba en el armario tiene ganas de salir, deja que se coma el barrio antes de irte a dormir. Cuando son casi la una la loba en celo saluda a la luna. Duda si andar por la calle o entrar en un bar a probar fortuna*. In this case, promiscuity (a habit frequently associated with men) is adopted by women.

5.2.3. FLIRTING IS OVER.

One of the consequences of the situation described above is that there has lately been a complete lack of abilities for romance. Surprisingly, despite the importance and prominence given to image, young people prefer to hide and maintain dirty conversations on the social networks, where flirting has been moved, as García (2009) has shown. The process of seducing is over for the youngest generations or, at least, it is done in a different way. Over the last sixty years the 'game of love' has changed, considerably, on the part of both sexes and music offers a faithful reflection of this change. The examples below (collected from the examined songs) provide an overview of flirting in both periods. A two-fold distinction can be made between, on the one hand, the subtleness and gentleness of the flirting in the 50s (*Lady of Spain I adore you right from the night I first saw you, my heart has been yearning for you; Dos gardenias para ti, con ellas quiero decir: te quiero, te adoro, mi vida*). And on the other hand, the straightforwardness of present time seduction (*vi que crecían amapolas en lo alto de tu pecho, tu pecho hecho en la gloria yo me fui "pa" ti derecho [...] Tu perfume es el veneno que contamina el aire que tu pelo corta que me corta hasta el habla y el entendimiento porque es la droga que vuelve mi cabeza loca; Me olvidaré de tu amor de garrafón, [...] querida barbie de extrarradio corre tu tinte está esperando*).

6. CONCLUSION

The main intention of the study was to compare the modern view of romance and the relationships man-woman, woman-man with the view of the traditional 50s, through the messages conveyed in songs. Likewise, there was an interest in finding

out how men and women are portrayed in songs and their possible effect on the audience.

Some conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of the *material* and *mental* processes in the lyrics. Once the quantitative analysis of the processes in the songs has been carried out, it can be asserted that romantic songs now are much more material than sixty years ago, when the common thread of most lyrics was mental processes. Therefore, the primary hypothesis is confirmed. This increase in the material processes is a reflection of quite a few interesting gender findings and features that can be outlined as follows:

- In the 1950s:
 1. Man: active, seducer, chauvinist, and ruler
 2. Woman: passive, waiting, crying, object, silent
- 21st Century: two sides for each
 - Two sides of the female role:
 1. Woman who needs a man for her own benefit
 2. Wild hot woman, independent and brave that fights and swears
 - Two sides of the male role:
 1. More passive (even impassive), dying of love, sensitive
 2. The hooligan, chauvinist and lout.

Two main results are derived from the previous gender analysis: a) an extreme evolution of the roles and b) a considerable reversal of roles with time.

I hope that the findings in this study will be useful for students and teachers of Gender and Linguistics and that the data and conclusions encourage future researchers to explore songs through the systemic and gender analyses. The ideas in this article could give way to further lines of investigation and will provide new and varied grounds to expand the interpretation of gender studies.

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WEBSITES

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www.directlyrics.com

www.quedelettras.com

www.billboard.com

<http://www.popculturemadness.com/Music/Number-One-Songs-50s.html>

http://www.digitaldreamdoor.com/pages/best_billbord6.html

http://www.onlineweb.com/theones/1950_sheet.htm

www.promusicae.org (AFYVE)

www.sgae.es